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Grimoire

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Fall 1997

### Grimoire Vol. 31 Fall 1997

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# Grimoire

Fall 1997 La Salle University Volume 31



# **Grimoire**

## Foreword

We live in a time when a message's speed is valued more often than its quality. In such a time, it is a relaxing and refreshing change to be able to sit back and enjoy art for sheer pleasure. The artists whose work this book contains may have rushed to get their works to us by the *Grimoire* deadline. Their achievements, however, took unhurried, aesthetic energy that is too seldom esteemed. Today many appreciate technology, business, and money more than art. The *Grimoire* staff must concern ourselves with the methods, organizational procedures, and finances involved in producing *Grimoire*. Beyond these preoccupations, though, our fundamental responsibility is to the art that is the core of our endeavor. Thus our principle objective remains what it has always been: to display the most inventive, creative, and thought-provoking work submitted to us by La Salle students.

Only through creativity, expressed especially through written words and visual art, are we able to capture our emotions and reveal what we love, hate, fear, and hope for. What we create now will determine how we remember our past. Our artistry will remind us of how we defined our future.

We hope, therefore, that this little book will encourage you to take time out of your hectic life to envelop yourself in the art people around you have created. We hope you enjoy *Grimoire*, and that it might nourish all that is creative in you.

Heather Middleton  
Christina Puntel  
Managing Editors

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Cover Art by Carleen Rollo

## Spirit Season

The wind sings with memory  
filling my nose with it  
taking control of me  
and shrinking me till I'm small again  
garbed in a sweatshirt  
adorned with cokebottle lenses  
rooting through the pumpkin patch

I remember  
the straw and hay rides  
I laughed at the tissue paper ghosts  
because I knew all too well what real ghosts were

they lived in books  
and mirrors  
and guitar strings  
and lonely things

they sang me gray music  
when I was alone  
and bade me create worlds  
and give them all my attention  
they were hungry ghosts...

I still hear them now and then  
most have flattened and become symbols  
but some are still real  
they no longer possess all my attention  
instead they must be content with what I give them,  
stories, poems, music, whatever's on hand  
I can still see them when it's cold and the wind blows  
mostly in Autumn  
that's the spirit season after all

*Nick Scorza*



## ***THE TOOTH DARE***

I never could refuse a dare, so when that old sonofabitch Buddy Eppell said: "You're too much of a goddamned pussy to cut a tooth outta your own mouth," I said, "To fuck with you, watch me."

So Buddy followed me into the back office where there was an old rotten table and a brown leather chair. "Go ahead, big shot," Buddy said. "Go ahead and show us what you're made of."

I sat down on the leather chair and tilted my head back, and Buddy slid a dirty pair of pliers into my right hand. I saw they were really dirty, but I didn't say anything because I didn't want Buddy to think I was a pussy. I opened my mouth, slid the jaws of the pliers in and clipped onto my first upper right molar. Pulled with all my might; I actually thought it would come out as easy as a stone from the earth. After a minute or two, I got really sick of pulling, so I said, "Hand me the hammer on the stool." I took the miniature hammer from him and started banging at the molar like nothing you've ever seen. Now that I think back on it, it was an awfully peculiar thing to do.

I drooled blood all over my face and neck, my shirt and tie, right down to my belt; looked like Dracula. I knocked the loosened molar out like that, and I even smashed a couple others out of whack. Buddy didn't say a word. "So you didn't think I'd do it; did you, Buddy? Well, look it here, look it here." I held out the bloody tooth to him.

"So you did it, what do you want, toothy-boy?" Buddy asked, holding the bloody molar in the palm of his right hand.

"I want my goddamned tooth back," I said, and Buddy gave it back.

*Chris Lilienthal*



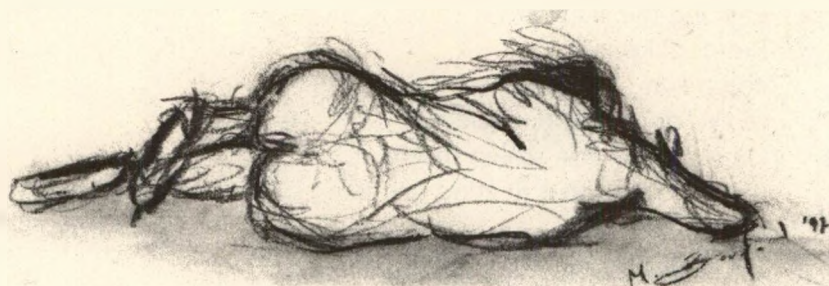
## Yearning

Laid out, against a crystal sand,  
naked with all exposed to see.  
Cheeks warming in the laughing sun,  
her hair flutters softly across  
her dazzling neck.  
So soft. So smooth. So...

like a breeze dancing on  
her rose-tinted thighs,  
enticing the skin with  
hot-cool kisses,  
composing an innocent  
reply - goose bumps rise.  
Gazing upon this stolen moment,  
rewards me with a fleeting glimpse  
of ecstasy.

I never caress such beauty  
Or happen to brush  
upon her charms  
So close. So far...  
a lonely sadness  
cools me.

*J. Marshall Pickard*



**Reclining Nude** (charcoal on paper)

*Magdalen M. Boufal*

## Sunrise

While the city sleeps,  
my cat and I  
see the sun rise.

By the flicker of the monitor  
we adjust our eyes  
to the light outside  
which, upon entering the room,  
beckons us to bed.

*Amy M. De Santo*

## Fishing

An old man walks with his sole rod  
And bright yellow raincoat and cap  
As his footprints cringle in the high grass  
Winding towards the poison pond  
That is murky beyond reflection.  
Piles of dry grass and the dead wood of a boat  
Are whitened in the last sun  
And some bars of dead grass stand guard  
Intermingled with green strands  
Round the pond's opaque circle  
Under the sky raper's wake  
Through the choke of a factory day  
As a multicolored chain of cars is pulled home  
Along the endless gray highway.

The old fisherman drops his lifeline,  
Thin and transparent and fragile,  
Into the liquid dirt.  
With a single thread,  
Hung from a softly sinking boat  
In a mirage of a pond,  
He is sitting and waiting,  
Waiting and sitting,  
Gently swaying.  
In these strange years  
When the sun no longer rises  
Of gray days of low clouds  
And Earthbound purgatories,  
He patiently -  
Waits.  
Wades.  
Tells his old life,  
He's gone wishing.

The stars are plenty  
In this land captured by red brick homes  
That stand at attention  
In the long shadows  
Of towers that greed built -  
Man's dark lights  
Are the only ones he has known.  
As he slowly absorbs the conquered air  
It burns in the sides of his nose  
His body ever itching  
Under the chains of old uniform clothes.  
Though his plight was never light  
He waits for his last refuge  
As his boat slowly wades  
Waiting  
While raindrops of lost dreams  
Ripple across the dead lake  
In concentric rings  
Then quickly fade.  
His world-aged face  
Remains sullen  
In silent recognition,  
Fishing is his last calling.

*Gerald Glover*

## **SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY**

The winter sky was especially bright. If it hadn't been for the biting wind and frigid temperatures outside, Evan Hobbs might have believed it was the spring. But as he drove from Albany to his family's farm in northern Pennsylvania, Evan was aware of the February date. It had only been six days since his divorce with Allison had been finalized. Married five years, the couple had realized that they married too young. Allison said she needed to experience more; Evan just knew it was over.

As Evan drove off the rural highway and onto the narrow dirt road of the dairy farm, he admired the grounds. The red barn had been repainted the previous summer, and the twin steel silos, tall and blue, glistened in the sunshine. These were a new brand of silos, Evan's father had told him. Standing side-by-side, they could last a lifetime. The seventy cows were roaming on the hilly pastures, feeding on the barrels of hay that replaced summer's lush grass. Evan wondered if the cows knew the difference between the two; he certainly noticed. The dead grass and barren trees again reminded Evan of winter.

The farm had been in Evan's family for more than a century. His father's grandfather had purchased the fifty acres in 1889. Each generation since had kept the dairy farm. Evan's father had wanted to move on; he had wanted to go to school. But the older sons in the family became professionals, and it was up to Michael to keep the farm when his parents died.

Evan walked onto the porch of the two-story white farmhouse. The wind was howling and Evan noticed the cows. Growing up, Evan knew that cows hated wind. So did Evan.

"Hello?" Evan called as he walked inside.

"I'm in here," Evan's mother said. Caroline Hobbs was calling from his parents bedroom. As he walked up the wooden steps that led to the second floor, Evan remembered countless days after school. His mother would be doing housework in one of the bedrooms as Evan changed into his work clothes. His job was to help his father feed and then milk the cows.

Evan walked into the master bedroom. His mother, small-framed with graying hair, sat on a cherry-wood chair near the window. She was sewing the sleeve on one of her white blouses.

"How was your drive?" she asked.

"It was fine." Evan bent down to hug her. "It was just fine."



"Good," she said, smiling. "He's in the barn, you know. You might want to help him."

"I will," Evan said as he left the room, leaving his mother to do her work.

Again, outside the wind howled in Evan's ears. He could hear nothing except the air as he went around the back of the house to the barn.

Evan found his father near the silo, grinding feed for cows. Two tons of soybean and corn meal. Michael saw Evan approaching and shut off the grinder.

Immediately, Evan noticed that his father seemed old. With a tanned face and wrinkled skin, he looked even older than his fifty-five years. And Evan knew that his father was probably tired and that his body ached all of the time. Arthritis had already settled into his hands and knees, and it could only be a matter of time until it spread.

"Evan, how are you?" his father asked, extending his callused hand.

"I'm okay, Dad," he replied. He looked to the ground. "It was finalized on Monday. Anyway, I don't feel like talking about it. You need help?"

"I always need help," he said, smiling. "The cows need to be milked in about an hour."

"All right. I think I'll go see Lizzie first - I'll meet you in there."

Elizabeth was Evan's sister, three years his senior. She and her husband, Bryan, had built a house on the farm but had nothing to do with its daily operation. Occasionally, their two young sons, Steven and Alex, would help out in the barn. Bryan was a pharmaceutical salesman, traveling all over northern Pennsylvania and southern New York. Evan had thought the couple would move out of the rural lands of Susquehanna County; Bryan just seemed to be the type to have a house in suburbia with a two-car garage.

Evan remembered when he found out they were building a house on his family's land. It was just after his sister had accepted Bryan's proposal.

"So, Ev, I've been thinking about building here," Bryan had said. Evan hated being called "Ev."

"Here? Are you interested in helping my dad?"

"Not at all. I hate farming. But the scenery is nice. I've always liked the scenery."



Immediately, Evan knew they would not be close. To Evan, Bryan epitomized shallowness. But his sister loved him. And Evan would try to accept him.

Evan walked up to the front door. Before he could knock, Elizabeth greeted him. She was as tall as Evan.

"Hi," she said, giving her brother a hug. Her long, brown hair was pulled back. "Come inside."

She led him into the house and they seated themselves at the kitchen table. The kitchen was cluttered, but not disorganized. Pictures of the children were hanging on the refrigerator. Elizabeth poured some coffee.

"So, to what do we owe this visit?" she asked.

"I guess I just needed to think about things. I had some vacation time, so here I am." Evan was a features writer at the *Albany Times Union*.

"Have you seen Allison?"

"We met with the lawyers on Monday. It's final," he said.

"Really. Oh, Jesus, I'm sorry," she said.

"It's fine. It's for the best, really."

Evan knew it was for the best, but he was having a really hard time accepting the fact.

"Are you sure about that? You seem uncertain."

"I don't know, Lizzie. There we were in the lawyer's office, trying to decide who got the couch and who got the stereo system. It was ridiculous."

"I'm sure it was."

"I was just sitting there, and I realized that five years of my life were gone and I was arguing about dishes and books."

"Who's keeping the house?"

"No one. We're selling. She got an apartment some time ago and I'm in the process."

Talking to Lizzie was therapeutic for Evan; so was working in the barn. Soon, Evan said good-bye to his sister and made his way back to help his father.

Evan thought that cows were miserable animals and he wondered how his father had put up with them for so long - without a day off.

Every Christmas, every Easter, every birthday.

The animals needed constant attention and care. The fifty acres needed to be tended to and the barn needed to be kept clean. There was no time to waste.

Evan helped his father milk the cows and the two hour job took only one. Milking the cows was a tedious process, but somehow relaxing for Evan. When he came home, he didn't mind the work. Evan enjoyed talking to his father; he always had a new story to tell. Mostly, though, Evan felt completely comfortable. He knew how to do the job quickly and efficiently. Evan knew that he could be gone from the farm for a year or ten years, and he would still know how to milk a cow. It was internal.

That night, Evan lay in bed with his eyes wide open and his thoughts wandering. He remembered the first time he had taken Allison to meet his family. They were seniors in college. It was Fall Weekend. The farm, framed in trees of red, orange, and yellow, looked glorious. Allison had said, only half-jokingly, that she would not mind being a farmer's wife. But they both knew Evan had no intention of going into the family business. Still, in those early years, Allison would probably have moved back to the farm at a moment's notice.

Evan had always felt guilty about leaving the farm. Growing up, he had wanted to take it over. As he progressed in high school, he found his love fell to writing, not farming. And his father had always wanted Evan to get a college education, to live a better, easier life than he had. His father had always told Evan to get out of Susquehanna County.

But, that night, as he stared at the ceiling that he had stared at so many times before, Evan wondered if he had made a mistake. He wondered if he could go back. He knew the work of the farm as well as he had ever known anything. And the solitude of farm life appealed to him at that moment. He wondered if he could be happy.

In addition to the fifty acres of the Hobbs Farm, Evan's father rented two-hundred acres on the Susquehanna River banks. It was ten minutes from the farm and the soil was perfect for the one-hundred and forty acres of field corn and sixty acres of hay. All for the Holstein cows.

Evan drove down to this land the next afternoon. He told his father he would check for flooding. Michael would be getting the land ready for planting soon after the spring thaw.

The Susquehanna, wide and dark at that point, had always been Evan's sanctuary. He would walk along its edge and just being near the water calmed him.

As he threw small stones into the water, Evan again thought about leaving the newspaper and joining his father. Evan thought it might be just what he needed to clear his head of Allison.

Evan couldn't stop thinking of her. He tried to forget. He knew Allison would be happier this way and that they had been just going through the motions of marriage. But Albany was Allison. Before the divorce was finalized, anything could have happened. Maybe a reunion. Maybe. But it was too late now. The marriage was over and Evan was just beginning to really realize his emptiness.

Evan arrived at the farmhouse that evening and found his father sitting in his arm chair, reading the Sunday paper.

"You all done, Dad?" he asked.

"Yep," he said. "How's it look down there? Any flooding?"

"No, none. It's okay," Evan said, taking a seat on the couch. The house was quiet. His mother was at Elizabeth's. "Dad, I wanted to talk to you about something."

"Allison?"

"Well, sort of," he said. "I'm thinking about leaving Albany."

Michael put down his newspaper and looked directly at his son.

"Where will you go?"

"Here."

"Here? To do what? The only newspaper we have is the weekly paper," Michael said.

"No, Dad. I'm thinking of coming back to the farm. I think I want to take over for you." Evan, nervous and unsure of himself, was now standing.

"Evan, you don't want this," he said, shaking his head. "You don't want this life. I don't even want this life anymore." His words were slow, honest.

"I know you don't, and I need to get out of Albany. I need to start over."

"You can't do it here, Evan," Michael said with a strong and knowing tone.

"Dad, I can think for myself."

"You're not being rational."

Evan couldn't understand why his father was against his idea. He had done everything his father had wanted. He had gone to college and had a career. It was time now, Evan thought, to come back.

"Dad, I'm being rational. I know what I'm doing. I think it's my duty to do this - for you and Mom. And I want a change."

"This is not your duty," Michael said. "Listen, I'm here because I had to be. It was different then. I had to take over this farm. It has provided us with a comfortable life, but if I could do it all over again, I wouldn't."

"I'm alone now. It'll provide for me, too," Evan said.

"No, it won't. The whole dairy business is changing. These small farms won't be able to survive."

"Well, Dad, then I'll just come back for a while." Evan was almost pleading now. Like a child, he was desperate to prove to his father that he was right. "I will help you - you can't handle this by yourself anymore."

"I'll be fine," Michael said. "Your mother and I were talking about selling soon. Retiring. Keeping the land, but selling the cows, machines."

Evan was defeated. He knew there was no convincing his father. His one idea to escape had been denied.

"Well, I don't know what to do then. I really don't know what to do," Evan said, leaving the room, leaving his father to read the newspaper.

Evan walked across the dirt road that separated the family house and Elizabeth's. The light was on in the kitchen and Evan walked in through the back door. Bryan was seated at the table, doing a crossword puzzle.

"Hey, Bryan. Is Lizzie around?"

"She's with the boys - getting them ready for bed. Do you want me to get her?"

"Yeah. Actually, can you tell her I'll be in the barn. Ask her to meet me there when she's done?"

"Sure," Bryan said. "You can wait here if you'd like."

The last thing Evan wanted to do was chat with Bryan.

"No, thanks. I'll be out back."

Evan walked to the barn and slid open the enormous doors. It was dark and cold inside; he could see his breath. Evan climbed the ladder to the hay loft, and fell into a small stack. He remembered taking Allison there. It was during that Fall Weekend visit. Evan was showing her the grounds at night and they climbed onto the loft. It was just as cold. Allison had said that she had always wanted to make love in a hay loft. And as their bodies joined, they warmed each other, Evan knew that he was going to be happy with her.



Evan checked his watch and wondered if Bryan had given Elizabeth the message. As he waited, Evan just listened to the silence of the night. There was nothing, Evan thought, like the country on a winter night. So cold and clear. All sounds amplified. Soon enough, the barn door opened and the overhead lights came on.

"Evan? Are you in here?" Elizabeth called.

"I'm up here, Lizzie," Evan said and started down the ladder. There was hay in his brown, curly hair.

"What were you doing?" Elizabeth looked confused.

"Nothing. Just waiting for you. I wanted to talk to you."

They sat down in another pile of hay.

"All right. What's wrong?" Elizabeth asked.

"I'm going out of my mind, that's what's wrong. I can't stop thinking about her. And then Dad and I argued."

"About coming back here."

"He told you?" Evan asked.

"Yeah. He told me. He told me to come and talk some sense into you," she said, smiling.

"Don't even try. I'm just giving up on all of it."

"Evan, I know you miss Allison. I know this is hard for you, even if you think, logically, it's for the best. But coming back here to farm is not the answer."

Evan wasn't sure if he could believe her.

"I guess I'll go back to Albany tomorrow," he said. "Back to my empty house and my wonderful life."

"I guess you will," she said quietly.

Evan and Elizabeth stood up and said nothing more. He walked out of the barn behind her, shutting off the lights. Again, the wind howled and it went right through Evan. He could feel it in every bone.

*Susan Chernesky*

Ode to a dead pretzel bit upon drowning in a  
glass of pink lemonade

Satanic pretzel commune in a bag.

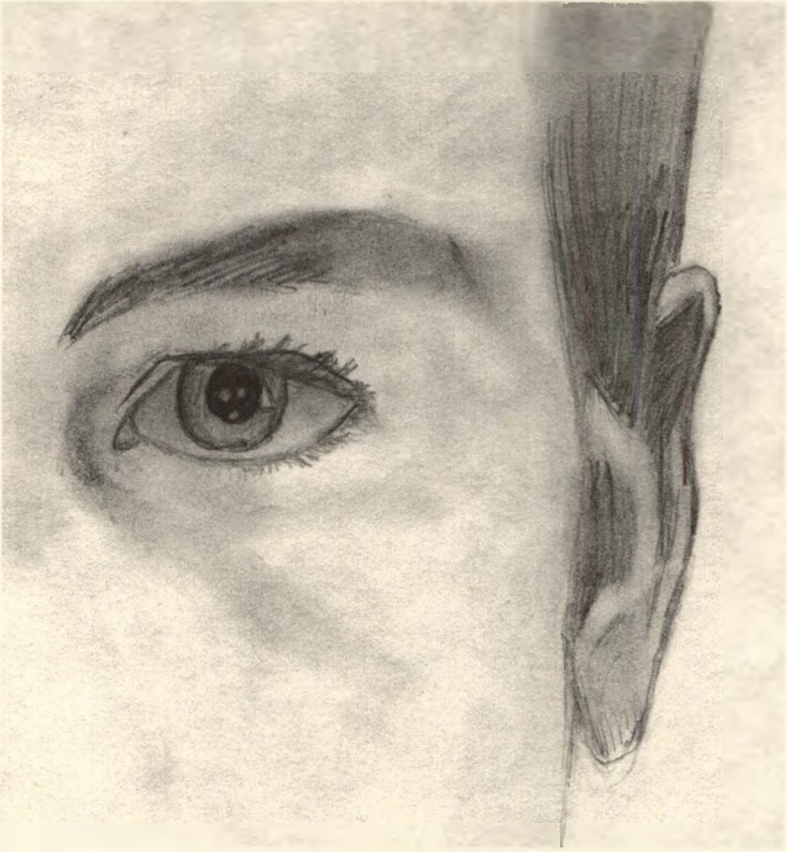
Run pretzel bit - Run!

Crushed by the hand of fate --  
on the table of hell.

The bird of life devours the  
entrails of the lost niblet:

Ashes to ashes;  
Crumbs to crumbs.

*Christine King*



**Self Portrait (pencil)**

*Stephen Pflugfelder*



New York Movie  
(From Edward Hopper, 1939)

Alone, New York  
    movie house  
I am separated by a thin wall  
    and darkness  
I realize my situation  
    If I look around the  
        bend  
I never return

I'll just jump right through  
    the screen  
I'll find life  
I'll dance  
I will leap from reel to reel  
Live the life of heroes, legends  
    idols, demons  
I will no longer have to choose  
    fear failure  
The script will be my words  
The screen my parchment  
My image ever-present  
in the eyes of lost dreamers  
nameless dreamers,  
    like myself

I know every face  
that enters into this paradise-  
pale, grim gypsy faces  
    shivering  
    from a cold world

However, this night I'll wait  
Like always, under a soft light  
For if you haven't heard the news, I have. . .

-Jimmy Stewart, dead at 89-

Man's escape comes with the arrival of the  
next movie show  
the human machine  
sedated  
American icon  
faded

*Jim Lewis*

## Piano

Dipping both hands into a pool of black and white keys  
Used to open and invoke the tempest,  
Which draws the immortal mind into meditations of the  
imminent danger,  
One may not fear, but one must respect the arousing power  
of the  
Uncontainable, as you with courage prepare for the chivalries  
and intense  
Combat of unexpected imagery caused by the captivating  
coordination of  
an army of sound parading with precision to an endless  
measure of music,  
The sound assaults quickly, like a summer sun shower, then  
fades,  
Blending into a memory leaving peace

*Broderick A. Jones*

## ***WHEN THE CURFEW BLOWS***

Sometimes you can't realize the transcendent essence of an epiphany the first time you're experiencing it. Certain experienced people swear by repetition as the ultimate tool of realization. Often times in ignorance, people choose to ignore or deny what's happening to them, or around them, because they've let themselves become desensitized by the rigors of life. Ignorance is easily perpetuated in these ambiguous times because it is so easy to become distracted, preoccupied and indifferent while trying to stay "current" in a technologically advancing society.

I myself have become disenchanted by the shrinking moral fiber within the contemporary milieu. I have become more antisocial and obsessed with indoor activities since we've gotten a computer. One afternoon, when I was sitting at the computer, I had an eidetic experience, something that's often associated with *deja vu*. I later remembered having been far gone in a country music daydream. So far gone, in fact, I was hearing the distant sound of pedal-steel train whistles. I was mesmerized by the colorful geometric patterns square dancing across my screen-saver...

...The train whistle was blowing a mournful eulogy. I saw thick black smoke billowing out of the train's stack. The smoke was thick like pudding, and it flowed back over the engine. The smoke passed through the trees and left a light gray coal dusting on the dark green leaves. Near the tracks, a thin man danced alone on a wooden stage. He was stomping about with cathartic vigor in some oversized brown leather work boots. The shuffling boots rasped back and forth across the wooden floor. He wore raw sienna corduroys held up by elastic, ochre-colored suspenders. A red-plaid, flannel shirt hung loosely over his gaunt frame, and his frazzled, salt and pepper beard adhered with greasy familiarity to the collar of his gray, long-john undershirt. His stained sleeves were folded up to the elbow, exposing tanned and wiry forearms and large, knobby-knuckled hands. His hands were what drew your attention and, upon closer scrutiny, they seemed to have been defined by years of outdoor manual labor, both callused and knurled by a latent arthritic condition. The hands made you want to look at the face and into those eyes to fathom what mystery and personal agony they'd experienced. He was a curiosity that an inquisitive person couldn't resist trying to unravel. After you saw him, you either gave him a wide,

apprehensive berth or you immediately attempted to engage him in an endless discussion about the things he'd seen and done. Then, again I heard the music; it was distant, melancholy and poignant. The lyrics in a ballad usually tell a story:

...hear the curfew blowing, in the col' black midnight  
 ...it's the lonesomest sound, boys, that I ever did hear,  
 boys  
 ...my body will hang, boys, on the hangman's rope, boys  
 ...on the gallows pole, boys, when the curfew blows  
 ...hear the curfew blow?

He looked like a rascal and an outlaw. He had long hair, parted neatly in the middle, that hung down to the middle of his chest. The faint scent of Irish Spring was in the air, not quite masking, but mingling with an aura of Jack Daniels, sweat and stale shit. The rope was made of a coarse, double-braided tan hemp, and was an inch thick. I could hear a lonesome cicada mournfully droning somewhere off in the mist-filled valley. Every fiber of rope seemed to creak as it tightened around the rosined oak beam. It was the ultimate in solo performance. The entertainment was smoothly and confidently improvised to elicit every last drop of dramatic emotionalism. He shuffled and shimmied to the beat of a different drum. He swayed back and forth and from side to side. His face was stark reality. The chiseled features were pockmarked by some ancient and insular wind as it cut across some desolate field, on a rocky, hard-scrabble farm...

...hear the curfew blowing, hear the curfew blow  
 ...in the col' black midnight, hear the curfew blow  
 ...it's the lonesomest sound, boys, that I ever did hear,  
 boys  
 ...it's the lonesomest sound, boys, on the stroke of  
 midnight  
 ...hear the curfew blow

His eyebrows were a wizened bushy brown. His eyes were intimidating, but his demeanor was indifferent, almost innocent, once you got past the eyes, those penetrating, steel gray and blue barbs. Those eyes could scathe the soul with their squinting, flint-like reflections. They seemed to see things that were distant and far off, both intuitive and aloof. With a broad grin and a hearty chuckle, he quickly dispelled any ill-founded notions of exclusivity. He turned in a dance move, kicking up a leg and clapping his hands behind his back. He pivoted and swiveled, feinting his hips and shuffling from side to side. Back and forth,

back and forth, then he pirouetted around and away. Front to back, front to back, the old soft shoe, exaggerated but captivating and soulful. He was either a throwback to another era or a timelessly middle-aged Mr. Bojangles. The train swept out of sight around the bend, trailing away in a cloud of smoke and bright orange cinders. Bojangles swayed with the rhythm and didn't miss a beat when the trap was sprung. He fell down and out through a dazzling light. He will remain forever revered, anonymous and eternal.

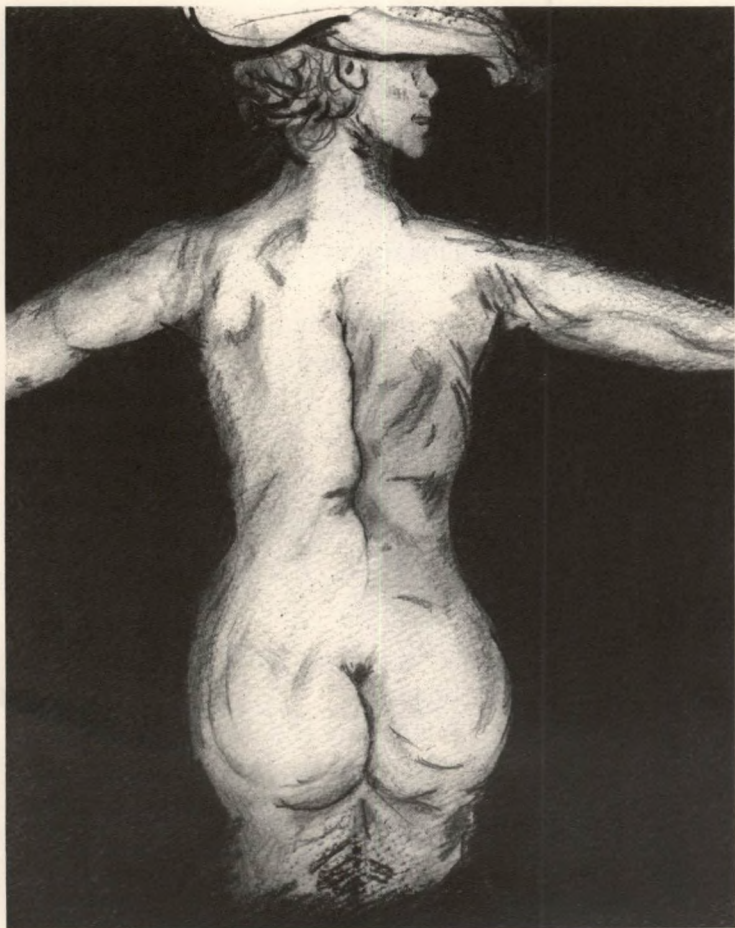
...the sheriff's men, boys, are on my trail, boys  
...hear the curfew blowing, hear the curfew blow  
and when they catch me, my body will hang, boys  
...on the gallows pole, boys, when the curfew blows  
...in the midnight wind, boys, hear the curfew blow

They say the grass still grows green in that part of the country. The sheriff chases other men now, and the old-timers still talk to those who'll listen. Legend has it that sometimes at night, you can still hear the curfew blow, and it's the sweetest, most lonesome sound you'll ever hear.

Certain sights and sounds can trigger reminiscent memories or daydreams. Music can elicit special memories, and folk music can be an indelibly profound experience. When I eventually came back to myself, I realized I was listening to one of the great songs by Woody Guthrie; it had been playing over and over. The song, "When the Curfew Blows," was performed by Country Joe McDonald and is a special tribute to one of America's greatest folk singers. Folk songs often tell a story, and sometimes I find myself fantasizing about what it would be like to be part of the story. "So here it is at last, the distinguished thing."

*Walter E. Jackson*





**Untitled (charcoal and artist's pencils)**

*J. Marshall Pickard*



## Cry of Nature

In the moon's crescent, find solace  
For worlds and stars are empty too  
And moons and moods wax and wane,  
And it seems the casting seasons  
Never cease to change.

Through this drought within,  
Listen close for the lone wolf's howl  
Soaring in the desert night  
To yearn for the moment's full moon  
As it drowns in the clouds,  
While imagining the fire beneath the dark sky  
With empty hands outstretched around  
That burns with the chorus  
Of crackling wood.

Distant roars of silence can be heard,  
When the soul is subtle  
Echoing from the mountains  
In solemn chants with the streams  
That weave into a fountain  
Winding past the forest squeals and screams  
To drink from the restless tides  
Beneath the countless seagull's cries  
Off towards the distant blue blend of the horizon.

And when sorrowful tears are heavy  
Like torrents of raindrops  
Against your windowpanes,  
Look to the waterfall  
And listen to the gentle cascade  
Let the soothing sound surround your Soul,  
Drizzle in the desert, and lightly calm the fire,  
Then know -  
Nature cries with you.

*Gerald Glover*

## As I Lay Kneeling

Others saw the cold metal in which she laid  
The ground that was to be her home,  
I saw yesterday and the day before,  
As I lay kneeling, kneeling with body, laying with soul.

People cried and sang songs of mourn,  
While dressed in fancy suits.  
I sang songs of yesterday and of mid-summer's afternoon,  
As I lay singing, singing with body, singing my soul.

Some proclaim that her salvation has come,  
A temple has passed, but her spirit stays strong.  
I cherish days of love and of a mid-summer's afternoon,  
As I lay kneeling, I know that she is gone.

*Michael Day*



**Fennec Foxes (graphite)**

*A. Raymond Bossert III*

## Arousing Oregon

I Ride the Moon,  
 glowing fuzzy WORDS fall as STARS  
     spread  
 unEVENly about your  
 cigarette cloud breezes.  
 I breath you IN.

Smooth jazz rolls in waves  
     pulsating over lost  
 pictures buried beneath  
     transparent veils.  
 Heavy, consenting to be forceful  
     then soft and syrupy.  
 Slithering a path wet  
 with passion through my arroyo  
     further down  
 to a silver and pink abyss  
     hidden,  
 not so well, by a quick  
     change of mind  
     by a little  
     masochist.

Shyly SMILING  
 superficial psychoLOGICAL  
     SEXual  
 scapegoat Mothering until withdrawal?  
 I SUREly do not believe.  
 Until we meet again.

*Beki Adamitis*

## ***THE GREAT CONDUCTOR***

In a frenzy, Justin grabbed the glistening, green wrapping paper, racing to rip it open. Carefully, he removed the enclosed box and set it on his numb legs, flipping it over as he did. The crinkled, purposeless paper floated down towards the faded blue carpet; his smiling father quickly snatched it up before it hit the ground. Through the box's plastic window, Justin closely examined the beautiful, black train caboose which was encased inside. "Jesus, Dad!" With his fingernail, Justin picked at the clear tape which held the box shut. "Where did you finally find it? We looked all over the—"

"I ordered it through Sam's a few weeks ago." His father leaned proudly on the back of Justin's wheelchair, careful not to move it. "I wanted to keep it a surprise."

"Well, ya did a good job," Justin finally managed to break through the tape and quickly opened the box.

"Beauty, ain't it, Just'? I think it'll fit in perfectly with the rest of the set."

Justin carefully removed the caboose from its plastic packaging. "It sure will!" He looked up to his father, "Did Scott know about this too?"

"Yep. So did your mother."

"Man. He never said nothing. Not a damn thing."

"That's pretty good for your brother." His father picked the box up out of his son's lap and read the back of it.

Justin cautiously cupped the six-inch mass of molded plastic with its tight, cold metal wheels, heavy in his hands. He peered inside the tiny windows to see huddled groups of red plastic passengers gossiping, sipping tea, talking of where they're going and where they've been. He wheeled himself inside and announced to the passengers that they would be running a bit behind schedule due to some reported blockage on the tracks ahead. The red plastic people stopped their conversing and glared at him angrily. They demanded refunds and mumbled obscenities, but Justin shrugged his shoulders with an air of power and wheeled himself into the dining car to get some delicious—

"Justin?" His father stood staring at him, a crinkled ball of wrapping paper in one hand, empty train package in the other. "Careful with that. You wouldn't wanna break it y'know?"

Justin took the box from his father and began to repackage the caboose. "Dad, I'm—"

"I know, I know..." his father smiled and rubbed the sweat from his brow with his sleeve, "you're fifteen." He took the back of Justin's wheelchair by the handles, "C'mon, let's see if we can get this thing set up before your mother calls us for supper."

\* \* \*

Justin flicked the light switch; the room stirred. Overhead, fluorescent lights flickered on casting incandescent starlight upon an entire world built to scale: small towns and villages constructed in the shadows of towering papier-mâché cliffs, divided up by twisting streams, connected by massive suspension bridges. Lights on oil tanks, street lamps, trolleys and train cars blinked, flashed, sparked and spun. Two wooden men seesawed through a village on a motorized hand car, frozen rail workers labored on a loading plank holding heavy barrels in their hands, static livestock peered through white fences with old, faceless women feeding them.

The trains bulleted through the towns, bringing supplies and visitors, leaving with runaway kids, factory products and raw supplies for the next town. The fate of all of these people lay in the trains; the fate of the trains in Justin's skilled fingertips. He wheeled himself over to his control table and flicked the master switches off. One by one the trains froze; the room was silent.

Justin searched the vast scenery. The Santa Fe Texas Coal Tender had froze in a small mining town which was set up twenty feet away. The Union Pacific Diesel Locomotive came to a halt in the middle of a high mountain bridge and the old Brill Trolley, which Justin had received when he was seven years old, had stationed itself in a small seaside village. However, the train that he needed that evening was far across the room, stranded in his desert. Justin was lacking the money to properly furnish this barren stretch of track; it had become a wasteland, a home to all of the leftover rubber shrubs, plastic trees, dust, dirt, paint and debris. The black and gold Reading Railroad stood out drastically from its fruitless surroundings; it was six cars long, lacking a caboose.

Justin flipped the Reading train's switch to *Medium* and the train began to inch forward. The sound of its miniature wheels on the track was like dried rice sliding down a metal shoot to be packaged; quiet at first as only a few grains slid, then getting louder as the train built momentum. Justin pushed the lever to *High*; the train rocketed towards the station in front of him, his



father watching with fondness. The door behind them opened as the train pulled up to Justin's platform.

"Looks like my little brother got his gift," Scott laughed as he stepped into the room. Kristen came in behind him, pulling the door shut.

Justin spun his wheelchair around, smiling. "Since when do brothers have secrets?"

"Believe me it was tough." Scott picked up the caboose's box and inspected it. "I've been ready to bust for weeks now."

Kristen held Scott's hand tightly and smiled at Justin. "That train's gonna be beautiful when you get it connected. It'll really be complete." She removed the green ribbon from her auburn hair, letting it free to float down towards her faded blue jacket. Smiling, she quickly brushed it behind her ears.

"Jesus," Justin laughed lightly, looking down at the right wheel of his chair, picking at the gray rubber with his fingernail, "Scott you must've been goin' nuts."

"You bet I was."

Justin opened a drawer under the main controls and pulled out a small plastic vile of liquid and a pair of scissors. He snipped off the top of the vile and squeezed a few drops of smoke liquid into a hole on top of the head car. "I can't wait to see this all set up."

His father beamed. "Going for the full smoke effect, huh?"

"Have you bought any new additions for the desert lately, Justin?" Kristen asked.

"Um..." Justin threw the rest of the plastic vile into a bag in the drawer, throwing the scissors on top before closing it. "No...no not really." He turned his chair to face her. "I'd like to get some plastic camels and tents maybe." His brother slipped the train from its box and handed it to him carefully. "Thanks..." He set the train in his lap and spun his chair back around. "And maybe a nice tunnel to break it up a bit."

"A tunnel in the desert?" his father laughed.

"Oh I'm sure that there are tunnels in the desert," Kristen looked to Scott for reassurance.

"Somewhere, I would think," Scott shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, well," Justin lined his new train's wheels up on the track, "it was a thought." He gently slid the caboose back and forth on the track to be sure that it moved smoothly, then carefully guided the new piece into its position at the back. He fitted the plastic knob at the front of the caboose into the small hole at the rear of the next car.



"All aboard." Justin flicked the switch to *Low*. "I'd better let this new piece warm up for a bit."

Justin's father stood proud, his arms crossed against his chest. Kristen huddled close to Scott who held her tight, smiling at his younger brother's mastery of the rails. Justin moved the switch up to *Medium*. The seven car train swept through the seaside town, passing the yellow Brill Trolley, the dock workers, store owners and playing children. Smoke was whispering, ribbon-like from the stack, a small light shone from the front of it. *High*. The train rocketed through the next big town, passing an oil tower with a red blinking light and shooting right past the loading ramp, leaving the workers to hold their barrels. It swept through the farmland, sending cattle and chickens scurrying before hitting the wide, open stretch leading into the desert.

\* \* \*

Justin's mother placed the smoking meatloaf in the center of the table. "There you go. Help yourselves."

Scott reached in and cut a slice for Kristen while their father brought the mashed potatoes and corn over to the table, "Smashed potatoes anyone?"

Justin raised his plate, "Right here."

Their mother asked Scott to pass the meatloaf, while their father spooned a large clump of potatoes onto Justin's plate. "So how's the new caboose?" she asked while reaching across the table to grab the plate from Scott.

"So far it runs great. Can I have the meat when you're done?" Justin cut a chunk of butter from the stick, and christened his potatoes with it.

Kristen sipped her milk, "It looks terrific. I really like that black and gold style."

"Mmm-hmm..." Scott shook his head, eyes wide, mouth stuffed with corn and potatoes.

"Well," their mother poured herself some ginger ale, "just be sure to take good care of it. That took your father a good while to find."

Justin flashed a smile over to his dad while he leaned to grab the dish of meat; his wheelchair slid a bit on the slick tile floor.

\* \* \*

Justin wheeled himself over to the trash compactor and reached down to push the foot release with his hand. The compactor slid out and he scraped the remainder of his corn into the brown paper trash bag with his fork. He rested the plate in his lap and shut the compactor before wheeling over to the kitchen

sink. His mother sat at the table looking through a magazine, his father took her plate on top of his own and set it on the white Formica counter beside the sink. Forks and knives slid, stuck to used wet napkins. "Go find Scott and tell him to give ya a hand with the dishes."

Justin strained in his chair to reach the faucet, "Oh, I'll be all right, I think."

His mother glanced up from her magazine and turned the page, "No. Scott comes over here to eat and wash his clothes, he can do some work, too." She brushed her hair back with her hand and returned to her reading, "They're probably watching television."

\* \* \*

Justin slid the living room door along its track into the wall. "Scott?" The television was turned on; Justin watched as the Fonz punched a juke box and it shut off to the clapping and cheers of the studio audience. Justin rolled his chair into the room; no sign of his brother. He backed himself out and turned down the hall. "Scott? Mom wants us to clean up the dishes." He rolled along through the hallway, pretending that it was a magnificent tunnel, cutting through a hillside. He shoveled some more coal into the fire, making him speed faster. "Scott? Where are ya?"

Nothing.

The doorway to the study creaked open and the choking stench of cigars slipped out into the hall. Justin coughed and slowly wheeled himself into the room. His nostrils burned. His father's briefcase lay open on his desk beside a series of pictures: his mother raking leaves, Scott's junior prom picture with Kristen, one of Justin in the driveway when he was nine shooting hoops from his wheelchair, another of a six year old Scott standing besides a three year old Justin's hospital bed, eyes teary. Also on the desk was a large fern which had begun to wilt. Justin made his way over to it, taking one of its dry, decaying leaves in his fingers. Brittle, it crumbled at his touch. Quickly, Justin wheeled himself out of the study to get the watering can on the windowsill of his room. During the summer, he had been trying to grow some marigolds there, but they were being stubborn and proved to be of too much trouble.

Justin grabbed the glass doorknob to his room and opened the door. He started to wheel himself in, but was jolted by the sight of two frantic bodies on his bed; in a frenzy Kristen grabbed Scott's glistening, green T-shirt, racing to rip it open. Careful, crazed removal of apparel; unbutton; unzip; undergarments;

flesh. Kissing necks, shoulders, lips; sucking quiet, quick. Tangled bodies, melted together; loose, purposeless, clothing floated down towards the faded blue carpet.

A sound emerged from Justin's throat as his eyes met theirs. He wheeled himself furiously from his room, with his eyes firmly shut. He sat in the hallway shaking, not knowing where to go.

Scott came out, pulling his T-shirt over his head; he was missing a sock and his brown, leather belt was unbuckled. He flashed a concerned look to Kristen, still in the room, and shut the door behind him. "Justin..." His brother sat silent, staring into his numb lap. "Just, I'm sorry...we just needed somewhere-"

Justin suddenly looked up at his brother with a jerk of his head, "I'm tired of you leaving me to clean up the God-damn dishes all the fuckin' time!"

"What?" Scott was trying to buckle his belt.

"Every fucking night you stick me with all the shit work!" He wheeled himself forward, then back again before slamming his fist down on the arm of his chair. His brother waved his hand, trying to persuade him to keep his voice down. Justin's throat burned, "I'm fucking sick of it, Scott!"

"Jesus, Justin," Scott wiped the sweat from his eyes with the back of his arm, "I'll give you a hand cleaning the shit up."

"Forget it." Justin spun his chair around, his legs hit the wall, but he felt nothing.

"Careful Justin, you're gonna hurt-"

"Oh, shut the fuck up, Scott! Just shut your fuckin' mouth." He turned back around to face him, face hot. Kristen stood behind Scott now in the doorway, her collar flipped up, auburn hair shoved in a ribbon.

"God you...you..." Justin trailed off. Kristen's eyes watered as Scott ran his fingers through his hair. Justin rubbed the black, cushioned arm of his chair, sucking in his breath, "...you fucks."

\* \* \*

Morning sunlight poured through the open window, baking the fruitless marigold with its heat. The flower pot was filled with sandy soil and tiny, white styrofoam balls. Justin opened his eyes; brown crust pinched his lashes. He sat up in his bed touching the cotton sheets, recalling the previous night. He sniffed them and could faintly smell bitter sweat and a touch of Kristen's perfume.

Justin reached for his chair, shuffled into it and pulled the dead weight of his legs off the bed. He straightened them in it and wheeled himself to the window sill. He looked out across the country side, green grass stretched over hills of earth, divided by a

thin creek. The maple tree leaves had begun to turn shades of stained glass. Justin looked in the front yard to see his father raking, his hair graying slightly. Then he noticed her white Cherokee in the driveway. He spun around in his chair.

"Good morning Justin..." Kristen stood in the doorway wearing a charcoal sweater with a crimson stripe, white collared shirt underneath and a faded pair of blue jeans. She played with her hands nervously, looking down at them, then back up at Justin, who was still dressed in his blue and green flannel pajamas.

Justin glared at her for a moment, then wheeled his chair around to face the window; he heard her cautiously approaching footsteps behind him. The floorboards beneath the carpet squeaked. Justin picked a dried up bud from the Marigold and pinched apart the parchment paper petals.

"Justin...Justin we're so sorry-"

"Where's my brother at?" Chips of the petals fluttered from his fingers to the splintered wooden sill below.

"He's um..." Justin saw her reflection in the windowpane, superimposed over the entire country side, her tormented eyes mingling with feathered clouds. "He's scared of you, Justin. He's scared 'cause he doesn't know what to say to you."

Justin rubbed a petal between his thumb and forefinger, grinding it into a sandy powder which stuck to his oily skin, then picked it off with his fingernail. He watched Kristen's reflection as she nervously played with her hands and then took a few steps backwards.

"We um..." the reflection turned and rushed out the door, her voice momentarily became muted, "we got you something. A gift sort of..." Kristen re-entered and hesitantly shuffled to his left side. Justin continued to look out the window. In the reflection, he saw her holding a fairly large package wrapped in last Sunday's comics. "We didn't mean to upset you, Justin."

He slowly looked up at her for a moment, searching for sincerity in her eyes; they overflowed. He looked back at his hands, nervously picking at his thumbnail. After a moment of silence he wheeled his chair slowly to face her. "A present?" His voice quivered.

Kristen placed it in his distant lap softly, smiling shyly. "Well, yeah. Sorta."

"Did you wrap it?" Justin traced the careful folds with his fingertip.

"Actually-"



"Don't tell me..."

"Scott wrapped it all by himself."

"I'll be damned," Justin read a *Calvin and Hobbes* comic as he spoke, "you're really teaching that guy something." He smiled at her.

"Well c'mon," she waved her hands, laughing, "tear it open!"

Justin broke the Scotch tape and unfolded the paper at one end of the package.

"Don't peek! Just rip it open!"

Justin bit his lip, took a breath, and tore the comics back.

\* \* \*

Kristen opened the door to the train room and wheeled Justin inside. The room was completely dark except for some light whispering through a window at the far end and the flashing red lights on the control switches. Justin cradled his new tunnel in his arms. She still gripped the comic page wrapping paper in her hand as she wheeled Justin across the dim room to his desert. The sunlight cast a pale blue tint across the sand, soft shadows kissed the ground, cast by gatherings of shrubbery, delicate trees, and stones. On any other day the desert looked like a wasteland, desolate and threatening; today, it held promise, fertile and flesh-like. Kristen helped Justin smooth a spot around the tracks and they set the new tunnel as a centerpiece. It was made of foam and shaped like a large, sandy mountain. Around the entrance and exit were gold pillars with intricate engravings which were reminiscent of an Egyptian palace. Palm trees jutted out from around the mountain with thin, fern-like leaves creating a shady canopy for the desert creatures living there.

Justin and Kristen blended the tunnel into its surroundings with some sponge bushes and Justin finished it off by dusting the area with a light coat of tan spray paint. He quickly wheeled himself to the control table; red blinking lights cut through the darkness. He slid open the drawer and pulled out the vile of smoke liquid. After squeezing a few drops into the smoke stack of the engine, he tossed it back in the drawer and shut it. He made sure that the train was lined up properly on the track and looked down to Kristen who was still standing by the tunnel, softly silhouetted by the sunlight behind her.

*Low.*

The train began moving slowly, its tiny light piercing the dawn of the seaside town. It chugged along at a smooth, slow pace, parading proudly past the old Brill trolley. Early morning workers on their way to the docks waved their plastic hands in

adoration as the train of the Great Conductor whispered by. Justin looked out the window of the engine as he passed on into the larger town. He waved to an elderly man, molded in gray plastic and carefully painted, who was riding a red aluminum bicycle. Large construction trucks stood frozen by the side of the rails, left vacant after a long day of work the evening before.

Justin switched the master control to *Medium*.

The train sped past a furniture factory and passed the oil tower, red light blinking feverishly in the darkness. Justin's hands were sweating, slipping a bit as he tightly gripped the control switch. He looked over to Kristen, she was leaning against the table, watching intently, smiling. The light behind her just barely caught her soft features; sparkling in the core of her eyes.

The train sped through the farmland; chickens scattered and farmers looked up from their tilling of the fields with worn curiosity. Justin flipped the switch to *High*; the train jolted, smoke gushed from its stack. Kristen bit her lip in anticipation as the seven car projectile rocketed across the flesh-colored landscape towards the tunnel. Justin winced. It entered at full speed. All seven cars disappeared completely for a moment before exploding out the other end. Justin flipped the switch off, stopping the engine a few feet from the tunnel's exit. Kristen looked over to him, smiling, confused.

Heart racing, Justin switched the train into reverse, backing it through the tunnel, almost returning it seven feet to the farmland. He sat there in his chair, staring at the switch in his hand; a smile across his lips. Suddenly, he slammed the switch to *High*, charging it forward at full speed once more, sending it plunging into the tunnel, his free hand clutching his numb right leg. Kristen grabbed hold of the table tightly while the tunnel swallowed car after car. Justin closed his eyes; the caboose slipped away into the darkness. His wheel chair rolled back a touch.

*Tom Quinn*



## Computers

*Save*  
*Delete*  
*Undo*

Why can't I do with  
*Life*  
What I can do with You?

*J. Marshall Pickard*



**Untitled** (ink on paper)

*Carleen Rollo*

## Obsession Tarnished

She kneels down before him  
And stares up at him  
As though he were a God  
Contemplates him  
Fails to find understanding in herself  
He stands almost awkwardly  
Feeling her stare  
Thinking it is admiration  
Feeling his pride swell  
He tosses his head  
In a way he has perfected  
hooks his thumbs in the loops  
of his perfectly faded jeans  
Smirking  
Now arrogant in his position

She finally stands  
After four subservient years  
Age making her his equal  
Time clearing her clouded sight  
Her eyes widen with realization  
Finally seeing the hideousness  
Under the outside beauty  
She viciously kicks out his pedestal  
Sending him sprawling in reality's filth  
Obsession tarnished

*Amy Van Vesse*

## In the Hallway

I'm coughing up butterflies  
My body wracked for a river of dreams  
Raging, tearing at the seams  
The sea of silken wings  
Can cut like knives  
Can hurt like lives

I dream of her again  
At the head of the Court of Stars  
I dream that a world will be ours  
And the night sky, open like an Opera House  
Holds no lies  
And many eyes

Her eyes caught fire today  
Flames licking from the bottom of the wells  
I see now the way two Hells  
Become one Heaven, as I receive like a penitent  
The lash of perfection  
The depth of reflection

And I'm caught in a fadeaway  
Helpless like a rounded stone  
To watch the fading of what once shone  
Her gaze moves onward  
And I'm left with the memory of eyes  
And the painful dream of butterflies

*Nick Scorza*



**Nude Figure Study (charcoal)**

*Magdalen M. Boufal*

**BLANCHED**

Light through the window on a Tuesday afternoon is the light of my grandmother. I would find her in the kitchen on a Tuesday day off. With a cup of coffee, two magazines (*National Geographic* and *Cosmo*) and a pack of matches, she would sit in the sun. My grandmother had quit smoking years before, but the matches were a habit. She carried them with her always.

*Susan Chernesky*



## Manifest Destiny

Consciousness flickering  
    like a porch light  
hard times written tougher than tough  
    always stormy Monday

"Take to the road," she said  
    a pale glimpse of reason  
there's a long white line  
        resting on a concrete road  
        that leads to heaven

play manifest destiny

Whistle a Guthrie lullaby  
    follow that white line  
    "It leads to the ocean," she said  
        the ocean has no memory  
        just a vast blue parchment  
man's fate and dreams determined  
        in its wakes and crests  
But are we the believers of fate?

Do you remember  
    the last time you cried  
Do you remember  
    where you left your heart

Your salvation, damp and blue  
    find it where the sun awakens  
    and shelters by night

*Jim Lewis*

## **BRILLE SWEET TARTS**

Maggie got the chicken pox in third grade. It had a very profound effect on her. Not because she missed all of the Christmas parties before vacation at school that year, but because it was the first time that she learned about germs. None of her friends had the chicken pox, not even anyone in her class. It was all because of Amanda Hackman. She was the only one. Amanda didn't have them that bad, but Maggie's were the worst. Her mom had to stay home from work to take care of her because, of course, her dad was long gone by then. She sat at the edge of Maggie's bed urging her not to scratch and told her how everyone had germs and how they could stick to things and how they could travel from one person to another. Maggie found this concept utterly fascinating. Her germs, little pieces of her, could fly off and touch other people. It was simply amazing. "...and that's why you should always wash your hands, that's exactly why it is so very important to use soap when you wash your hands. Especially after you pee." She didn't like to hear her mother say pee. It wasn't a grown-up word. Grown-ups powdered their noses, and the blunt ones urinated. Peeing required legs dangling over the edge of the toilet, not reaching the floor, ankles hugged by teddy bear underpants, or rainbows. Her mother's underwear was solid flesh tones and reached over the top of her belly button, to make her look slimmer she said. They hung out on the clothesline inflating and deflating in the wind like heaving chests without arms. If she had a date though, a black pair with thin straps and bows on the sides fluttered arrogantly in their midst.

On nice days Maggie liked to go outside and gaze down the rows of backyards, observing the drying laundry of her neighbors. She invented all of the intimate details of their private lives just by looking at the hanging clothes, their colors, the placement of the clothespins. Her mother once stopped to talk to Mrs. Rawnsley in the supermarket and all Maggie could think about was how she never bothered to sew the holes in her son's socks.

Clotheslines to Maggie were the most effective means of silent communication. When she learned about Morse Code in history class, the endless incoherent patterns of lines and dots, she imagined instead fighter pilots with woolen socks and camouflage pants billowing through the sky, clothesline masts brandishing sailor suits and eye patches, desperate clothespins carved out of the captain's wooden leg. And the major benefit of course was

how fast those clothes would dry. Maggie often thought too much about weird things, or that's what Emily said. Emily was the best friend that she had, but still there were things that she couldn't tell her. There were some things that she couldn't tell anyone.

Her father left when she was very young. She wasn't sure of the exact day, but in first grade when she brought the Father's Day card home that she made, there was no one to give it to anymore. He was never really around that much anyway. He was an actor, and that's just the way actors are. When she thought back about him one memory remained vivid in her mind, a mini movie with only fuzziness before and after the brief scene. Her mother took her to see him in a play near their house. He played a court jester, making jokes and juggling, even standing on his head. She sat on her mother's lap so she could see better, feeling her mother's belly shake against her back as they both laughed. He left soon after that. Her mother never talked about it, but Maggie guessed that he went to Hollywood with all of the other great actors. Emily asked her about him once and Maggie told her matter-of-factly that he was a very funny man and he wore hats (with bells). That was all she ever said. She hated that memory in some ways, her father so far away while her mother held her, two bobbing heads in an audience of so many others.

She was thinking about him a lot lately, probably because of Les the Mess. He was Mom's new boyfriend, recognized silently by the neighbors through the increasing number of black panties waving in the backyard.

One Friday in May, several months after Les's initial appearance, Maggie's mother decided to have him over for dinner. "Just like a family again." Maggie set the table, placing the fake gold napkin rings her mother had just purchased around their good napkins with difficulty. Her mother was running frantically around the kitchen, stirring spaghetti sauce and attempting to reapply her nail polish at the same time. When the oven timer went off she had plunged her wet nails into the oven mitts without thinking, streaking bright red lines down the fuzzy inside of the fingers. She was wearing an apron that said "Over 40 and Still Cooking." She was only 36. Les arrived right on time, flowers in hand, the shoulders of his leather jacket freckled with rain droplets. Maggie took Les's coat to the closet where her mother cornered her, trapping her whispered message between the closet door and the folds of Les's damp jacket: "Talk to him Maggie, he wants to get to know you better." She hurried off into the kitchen, the cellophane flower wrap crinkling as she waved

her drying nails through the air. Les and Maggie went to the table, taking seats opposite each other. She tried to think of something to say, imagining her mother's neck stretching out inhumanly toward the dining room from the stove, praying for Maggie to say something charming, witty, and evident of her motherly influence. Maggie looked at Les and smiled the sweetest smile she could muster.

"So (Mr. Mess), do you juggle?"

Les looked mildly confused and then began to smile, his upper lip receding under his mustache until the wiry hairs looked like they were actually his lip – a surgical animal replacement, like the boy who got the gorilla's heart on the news.

"Well Maggie, I guess I never tried."

"So you can't then (Gorilla Lips). It takes a lot of practice you know."

Les laughed, his eyes darting around the table as he fiddled nervously with his napkin ring. He seemed like he wanted so much to make a good impression that Maggie was afraid for a moment that he was going to grab the three golden napkin rings and attempt a juggling act. She imagined her mother walking into the dining room with Ludicrous Les on the table, a large red ball balanced on his nose, a hula hoop twirling around his waist, and her new napkin rings flying through the air. Instead, Les gently peeled the forgotten price tag from his napkin ring and slipped it into his pocket.

Maggie escaped from the table to her room as soon as dinner was over, leaving her mother and Les alone for dessert and coffee. She opened her window and stared out at the stars, her mother's faint laughter drifting up from the open downstairs window. It had finally stopped raining, but the air still smelled wet. After her chicken pox episode, Maggie used to sit by her window thinking of her father. She would try to send her germs, the little pieces of her that missed him most, out on the air, hoping somehow that they would reach him and he would think of her. Or perhaps they would settle on his sleeping eyelids and when he awoke, a glimpse of her would flash before his eyes and he would come home. She fell asleep with her head against the windowpane, still wet and puddled from the rain.

The next day Maggie and Emily walked to the movie theatre to see a movie that Emily picked. It was an older movie, a murder mystery that took place on a cruise ship. Maggie wasn't too interested. She had gone on a cruise with her mother a couple of years earlier. It was one of the best vacations they ever had.



Maggie got to be friends with a man named John, who was a little younger than her mom. He was blind, and he read to her from his books written in Braille, his fingertips running quickly over the raised dots, rearranging themselves into pictures in his mind. "My fingertips tell me about the things I can't see." That week she thought a lot about being blind. How John couldn't see the sun setting over the water or the waves as they slapped the side of the boat. She wished she could paint Braille stars, Braille clouds for John to touch, so he could see what she saw.

As she sat in the movie theatre, she was thinking more about her Sweet Tarts than the movie. She had a really good one in her mouth and she was trying to figure out what color it was. She took it out and held it up to the screen but she could only see its silhouette, a darkened crescent moon between her finger and the screen. She thought about putting it in her pocket until after the movie, or taking it over to the tiny lights in the aisles, when it occurred to her that John could never know what his favorite Sweet Tart was. Unless they started to make Braille ones. One dot for pink, two for yellow, three for purple. And they could sell them in movie theatres.

After the movie, they walked back to Emily's house. Her mother was sitting in the living room, a finished puzzle on the table in front of her. She'd been working on this one for a little over a week now, and every time Maggie came over she made her put in at least two pieces. "I finally finished it." She smiled at Maggie, looking at her over the top of her glasses, perched dangerously close to the edge of her nose. Maggie found herself unconsciously slumping, as if to force her to look at her straight. She gazed at the finished puzzle, trying to remember which pieces she put in.

"There's a piece missing." Maggie ran her fingers over the edge of the empty space. (Braille puzzles?) "That's a shame."

"I drew it on the box." Emily's mom picked up the box and showed Maggie where she had drawn the missing piece on the cover in black marker. She winked, still over the rim of her glasses, her eyelashes meeting and reaching over the frame as if to pull them to a safer spot at the top of her nose. "So next time we'll know."

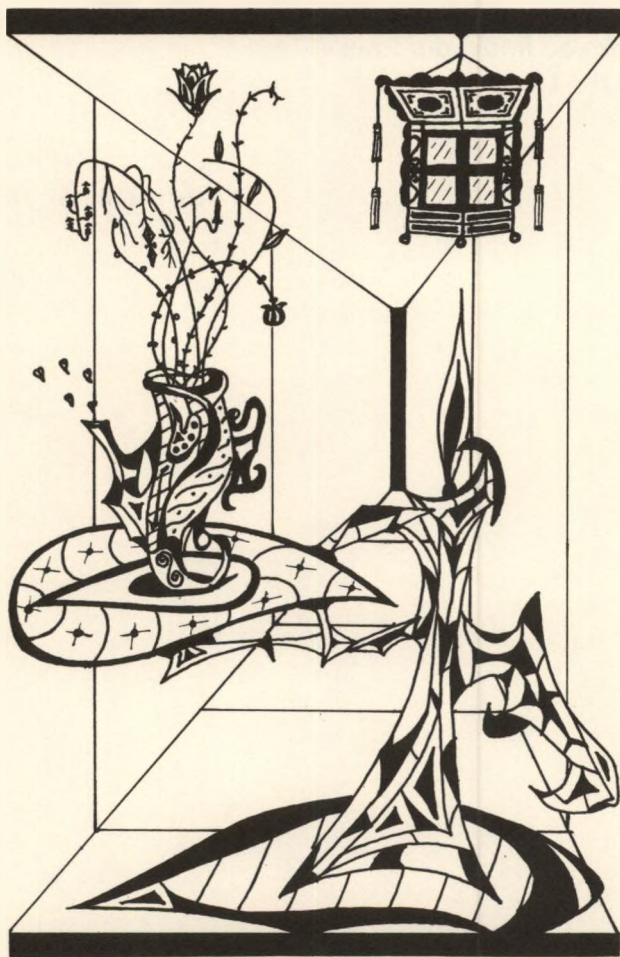
On Monday, Maggie's mom announced that they were going on a family trip to New Jersey the following weekend, and Les was going with them. They left early Saturday morning, after Maggie threw her bathing suit and a beach towel into her overnight bag. She fell asleep in the backseat before they got out

of their neighborhood, her mother and Les whispering quietly about something in the front. She had a dream she was going through her house with a big black marker, drawing missing puzzle pieces in thick black lines. One at the dining room table, one on the empty pillow next to her mother in bed, and one on the family portrait of her and her mother that sat in a silver frame on the mantle. She awoke and sat up as the car stopped, the pattern of the upholstery imprinted on the side of her cheek. She expected to see the beach and the ocean, or at least a rest stop, but there was nothing around except green fields and a small white church. "Where are we?" Maggie was confused, and groggy from sleep.

"We're in New Jersey, honey. C'mon, we're going for a walk." Her mother smiled at her almost sympathetically. Maggie climbed slowly out of the car, blinking at the bright sunlight. They began to walk toward the church, Les leaned against the car and watched them go. Maggie kept waiting for her mother to say something, to start explaining. But they walked on in silence, along the side of the church now, their feet brushing through the long green grass. She felt afraid for some reason, she wanted to know what they were doing there, but her voice was trapped in her throat. Her mother finally looked down at her. She looked very pretty the way the sun shined behind her hair, a translucent halo of stray strands above her head. "I have something to show you Maggie. I think it's about time." They rounded the back of the church, where there was a cemetery bathed in the shade of a large oak tree. Her mother began walking up and down the small rows, glancing at the stones. Maggie followed behind her, watching her ponytail swing from side to side as she moved her head. She stopped suddenly and guided Maggie toward a rounded headstone in the middle of one of the rows. She felt her mother's arms around her shoulders, on her hair. She pulled away slowly, until her hand touched the smooth stone, and her fingertips felt the carved letters spell out her father's name.

*Beth Staples*





**Adorned Perspective** (ink on paper)

*Christopher Huynh*

## Haiku 2

Curse this vile summer  
Which took you from your lover  
This cried the Lilies

*Broderick A. Jones*

## Undertunnel

From what is seen and heard,  
You'd trace along the bars  
That boil from the ores and charcoal-beaten tar.  
And decency is sure, for  
What nobler way to pave  
Than routine avenues that thriftily bare the save  
Like daily, clocked expresses.  
And what's to second-guess  
When all the hinges hold for steaming fire tests.  
But here I know the route  
From decommissioned trenches,  
The crossroads underneath blank with soot and stench.  
Where your head is bowed  
To make out full the lines,  
An engine tweaks my nose with nauseating grime.  
Your ears to foreground pierce, but  
My tongue will snatch the drift  
From pouncing sprigs of cobweb that plop from ceiling rifts.  
And I touch on all the vibes,  
Humming down my back,  
Where horns go whistling to orchestrate attack.  
So why should I come up  
When choices themselves steer?  
The road will impact soon when all in way are clear.

*Alex Groff*

## The Humble Haiku

To take a vow of  
silence would be to deprive  
the world of my wit.

*Fitz-Gerald Gallagher*

## Afterword

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# Grimoire

